

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2027

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0426

LIMDIS

C O R E C T E D C O P Y(PARA 3 LINE 9 5TH WORD SINCE VICE WHEN)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS : PFOR, XF, BA

SUBJECT : ARAFAT VISIT AND GOB VIEW MIDDLE EAST QUESTION

1. APRIL 7 I ASKED GOB FOREIGN MINISTER WHAT ARAFAT HAD BEEN UP TO DURING HIS RECENT STOP HERE, WHEN HE HAD MET WITH TOP GOB LEADERS. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID GOB WAS SURPRISED AND PLEASED AT ARAFAT'S "MODERATION". HE HAD INDICATED TO BAHRAINIS DESIRE TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH BOTH SADAT AND ASAD AND HAD DISPLAYED GENERALLY "FLEXIBLE" ATTITUDE TOWARD MIDDLE EAST QUESTION. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID BAHRAINI LEADERS HAD SOUGHT TO PERSUADE ARAFAT THAT THERE HAD NEVER BEEN A CHANCE EGYPT WOULD SEEK SEPARATE DEAL LEAVING PALESTINIANS IN LURCH. ARAFAT HAD REPLIED THAT HE HAD NEVER FELT CHANCE OF EGYPT'S GOING ITS OWN WAY WAS MORE THAN "5 PER CENT" BUT
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IN HIS POSITION EVEN THAT SMALL CHANCE HAD REQUIRED HIM TO

TRY TO "BRING PRESSURE ON SADAT".

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID ARAFAT HAD INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS PLEASED SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STEP-BY-STEP INITIATIVE HAD BEEN SUSPENDED SINCE HE WAS CONVINCED THAT, IF SUCCESSFUL, IT WOULD LEAD TO PACKAGE OF ISRAELI ARRANGEMENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL ARAB STATES WHICH WOULD GIVE INSUFFICIENT CONSIDERATION TO PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. ARAFAT HAD EXPRESSED TO BAHRAINIS HIS PLEASURE AT HAVING MET SENATOR MCGOVERN AND HIS GENERAL DESIRE TO SEE AMERICAN OPINION CHANGE TO AN ATTITUDE MORE SYMPATHETIC TO PALESTINIANS. ACCORDING FOREIGN MINISTER, ARAFAT HAD SAID IT IS TIME AMERICAN OPINION CEASED TO REGARD "ISRAELIS AS PEOPLE AND PALESTINIANS AS ARCHEOLOGICAL PHENOMENA".

3. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S CHARACTERIZATION TO ME OF ARAFAT'S "MODERATE" APPROACH HERE CONFLICTS WITH SOME OTHER REPORTS WE HAVE HEARD AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT GOB TRYING TO PUT BEST FACE ON VISIT AND DO A LITTLE "PR WORK" FOR PALESTINIANS. FACT REMAINS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER APPEARED NOTICEABLY MORE RELAXED AND OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE FOR MANY MONTHS. ARAFAT'S VISIT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS BRIGHTER GOB MOOD; SADAT'S MODERATE STATEMENTS SINCE SECRETARY RETURNED FROM MIDDLE EAST CERTAINLY HAVE HAD A CALMING EFFECT ON GOB CONCERN ABOUT MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.
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